

602 Addressing

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1.0 Elements of Addressing

1.1 Clear Space

A clear space must be available on all mail for the address, postage (permit imprint, postage stamp, or meter stamp), postmarks, and postal endorsements.

1.2 Delivery Address

The delivery address specifies the location to which the USPS is to deliver a mailpiece. Except for mail prepared with detached address labels under [4.0](#), the piece must have the address of the intended recipient, visible and legible, only on the side of the piece bearing postage.

1.3 Address Elements

All mail not bearing a simplified address under [3.0, Use of Alternative Addressing](#), must bear a delivery address that contains at least the following elements in this order from the top line:

- a. Intended recipient's name or other identification.
- b. Private mailbox designator ("PMB" or alternative "#") and number if the mailpiece is addressed to a commercial mail receiving agency (CMRA) address.
- c. Street and number. (Include the apartment number, or use the post office box number, or general delivery, or rural route or highway contract route designation and box number, as applicable.)
- d. City and state (or state abbreviation). The city is any acceptable mailing name for the 5-digit ZIP Code serving the intended recipient as shown in the USPS City State Product.
- e. ZIP Code (5-digit or ZIP + 4) where required:
 1. ZIP Codes are required on Express Mail, Presorted and automation rate First-Class Mail, Periodicals mail, Standard Mail, Package Services mail (except single-piece rate Parcel Post), all mail sent to military addresses within the United States and to APO and FPO addresses, all official mail (penalty mail), all business reply mail, and all merchandise return service mail.
 2. Unless required above, ZIP Codes may be omitted from single-piece rate First-Class Mail (including Priority Mail), single-piece rate Parcel Post, and pieces bearing a simplified address.

1.4 Complete Addresses

1.4.1 Complete Address Definition

A complete address has all the address elements necessary to allow an exact match with the current USPS ZIP+4 Product to obtain the finest level of ZIP+4 code for the delivery address. A complete address may be required on mail at some automation rates.

1.4.2 Complete Address Elements

A complete delivery address includes:

- a. Addressee name or other identifier and/or firm name where applicable.
- b. Private mail box designator and number (PMB 300 or #300).
- c. Urbanization name (Puerto Rico only, ZIP Code prefixes 006 to 009, if area is so designated).
- d. Street number and name (including predirectional, suffix, and postdirectional as shown in USPS ZIP+4 Product for the delivery address or rural route and box number (RR 5 BOX 10), highway contract route and box number (HC 4 BOX 45), or post office box number (PO BOX 458), as shown in USPS ZIP+4 Product for the delivery address). ("PO Box" is used incorrectly if preceding a private box number, e.g., a college mailroom.)
- e. Secondary address unit designator and number (such as an apartment or suite number (APT 202, STE 100)).
- f. City and state (or authorized two-letter state abbreviation). Use only city names and city and state name abbreviations as shown in USPS City State Product. Contact the National Customer Support Center (see [509.1.0](#)) for more information about the City State Product.
- g. Correct 5-digit ZIP Code or ZIP+4 code. If a firm name is assigned a unique ZIP+4 code in the USPS ZIP+4 Product, the unique ZIP+4 code must be used in the delivery address.

1.5 Return Addresses

1.5.1 Purpose for Return Address

The return address tells the USPS where the sender of a mailpiece wants it returned if the piece cannot be delivered.

1.5.2 Return Address Elements

The return address contains elements corresponding to those for the delivery address. A return address is required in specific circumstances (see [1.5.3](#)). If the sender's name is not included in the return address, another clear designation (apartment, suite, or room number) is required to ensure proper handling of ancillary services and/or return of the piece. ZIP Codes (5-digit or ZIP+4) are required in the return address of all mail on which postage is paid with precanceled stamps or company permit imprint, and in the sender's return address on Periodicals mail when "Address Service Requested" is specified. Official mail (penalty mail) also requires a ZIP Code in the return address.

1.5.3 Required Use of Return Addresses

The sender's domestic return address must appear legibly on:

- a. Mail of any class, when its return and/or an address correction service is requested.
- b. Official mail.
- c. Mail paid with precanceled stamps.
- d. Matter bearing a company permit imprint.
- e. Priority Mail.
- f. Periodicals in envelopes or wrappers.
- g. Package Services (except unendorsed Bound Printed Matter).
- h. Registered Mail.
- i. Insured mail.
- j. Collect on delivery (COD) mail.
- k. Certified Mail if a return receipt is requested.
- l. Express Mail if a return receipt is requested. The return address on the Express Mail label meets this standard.

1.5.4 Postmark

An endorsement directing return to point of mailing (postmark) is not honored.

1.6 Ancillary Services

The USPS uses the return address to provide ancillary services requested by the mailer (e.g., "Return Service Requested"). The return address on any mailpiece endorsed for an ancillary service must identify where the piece is to be returned and where the mailer is prepared to pay applicable postage and fees for pieces returned or for ancillary service provided at the mailer's request. A domestic return address must be placed in the upper left corner of the address side of the piece or the upper left corner of the addressing area.

1.7 Attachment of Different Class

If the names and addresses of the sender and intended recipient do not appear on both the host and attachment, the sender's name and address must be placed on one piece and the recipient's name and address on the other. Combination containers that have inseparable parts or compartments are mailable with the names and addresses on only one.

1.8 ZIP Codes**1.8.1 Purpose of ZIP Code**

The ZIP (Zone Improvement Plan) Code system is a numbered coding system that facilitates efficient mail processing. The USPS assigns ZIP Codes. All post offices are assigned at least one unique 5-digit ZIP Code. Larger post offices may be assigned two or more 5-digit ZIP Codes (multi-5-digit ZIP Code offices). Separate 5-digit ZIP Codes are assigned to each delivery unit at these offices. Unique 3-digit and multi-5-digit ZIP Code post offices have street listings in Publication 65, *National Five-Digit ZIP Code and Post Office Directory*.

1.8.2 ZIP+4 - A Complete ZIP Code

The most complete ZIP Code is a nine-digit number consisting of five digits, a hyphen, and four digits, which the USPS describes by its trademark ZIP+4. The correct format for a numeric ZIP+4 code is five digits, a hyphen, and four digits. The first five digits represent the 5-digit ZIP Code; the sixth and seventh digits (the first two after the hyphen) identify an area known as a sector; the eighth and ninth digits identify a smaller area known as a segment. Together, the final four digits identify geographic units such as a side of a street between intersections, both sides of a street between intersections, a building, a floor or group of floors in a building, a firm within a building, a span of boxes on a rural route, or a group of post office boxes to which a single USPS employee makes delivery.

1.8.3 Numeric Delivery Point Barcode

A numeric equivalent of a delivery point barcode (DPBC) consists of five digits followed by a hyphen and seven digits as specified in [708.4.1.4](#). The numeric equivalent is formed by adding three digits directly after the ZIP+4 code.

1.9 Additional Addressing Standards by Class

Basic addressing standards for First-Class Mail, Express Mail, Standard Mail, and Package Services are in the Rates and Eligibility section for each class of mail. Additional standards for Periodicals are in [707.3.2, Addressing Standards for Periodicals](#). Standards apply to overseas military mail, Department of State mail, mail in window envelopes, international mail, and mail claimed at any automation rate.

2.0 Restrictions**2.1 Dual Address**

Mail with a dual address (both a street address and a post office box number) is delivered to the address immediately above the city and state (or to the post office box if both the street address and post office box are on the same line). If a ZIP+4 code or 5-digit ZIP Code is used, it must correspond to the address element immediately above the city and state (or with the post office box number in the address if both the street address and post office box are on the same line). These restrictions also apply to return addresses on mail (for more information, see Publication 28, *Postal Addressing Standards*).

2.2 More Than One Post Office

Mail with the name of more than one post office in the delivery address or return address is not acceptable for mailing.

2.3 Mail Addressed to CMRAs

Mail sent to an addressee at a commercial mail receiving agency (CMRA) must be addressed to their private mailbox ("PMB" or "#") number at the CMRA mailing address.

3.0 Use of Alternative Addressing

3.1 General Information

3.1.1 Use

Alternative addressing formats may be used as described in [3.2](#) through [3.4](#) in *Use of Alternative Addressing*.

3.1.2 Prohibited Use

Alternative addressing formats may not be used on:

- a. Express Mail pieces.
- b. Mail with any extra service under [503](#).
- c. Mail with any ancillary service endorsement under [507.1.1](#) through [507.1.8](#).
- d. Periodicals intended to count as subscriber or requester copies to meet the applicable circulation standards.
- e. Mail addressed to an overseas military post office under [703.2.2](#).

3.1.3 Treatment

Mail with an occupant or an exceptional address format is delivered as addressed and is not forwarded. Such mail is treated as undeliverable only when the address is incorrect or incomplete or when the mail cannot be delivered for another reason related solely to the address (e.g., a vacant building), as shown in [Exhibit 507.USPS Endorsements for Mail Undeliverable as Addressed](#). Periodicals publishers are notified when mailpieces with the occupant or exceptional address formats are undeliverable for solely address-related reasons. Mail with a simplified address format is distributed to all deliveries on a route or to post office boxholders. Undeliverable mail with any alternative addressing format is disposed of as waste under [507.1.9.1](#).

3.2 Simplified Address

3.2.1 Use—Rural and Highway Contract Routes, P.O. Boxholders

The simplified address format (“Postal Customer”) may be used on mail only when complete distribution (except as provided for congressional mail under [703.6.0](#)) is made to each family or boxholder on a rural or highway contract route at any post office and/or to all post office boxholders at a post office without city carrier service. A more specific address such as “Rural Route Boxholder” for mail intended to all boxholders on a rural route, followed by the name of the post office and state, may be used. The word “Local,” instead of the post office and state name, is optional.

3.2.2 Use—City Routes, P.O. Boxholders

When distribution is to be made to each active possible delivery on city carrier routes or to each post office boxholder at a post office with city carrier service, the addressee’s name; mailing address; and city, state, and ZIP Code may be omitted from the address only on pieces mailed as official matter by agencies of the federal government (including mail with the congressional frank prepared under [703.6.0](#)); any state, county, or municipal government; and the governments of the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and any U.S. territory or possession

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listed in [608.2.0](#). The requirement for distribution to each stop or post office boxholder may be modified for congressional mail under [703.6.0](#). The following also applies:

- a. Only these forms of address may be used instead of the addressee's name and address:
 1. "Postal Customer" (delivery desired at all addresses).
 2. "Residential Customer" (delivery desired at residential addresses only).
 3. "Business Customer" (delivery desired at business addresses only).
- b. At least 10 days before the mailing date, the mailer must submit a sample mailpiece and the following information to the entry office postmaster (in response, the mailer receives a mailing schedule that must be followed):
 1. Proposed mailing date.
 2. Total number of pieces being mailed.
 3. Method of postage payment.
 4. Names of all city delivery post offices to receive any of the mailing and the number of pieces for each.

3.2.3 Mail Preparation

All pieces must be prepared in carrier route or 5-digit carrier route containers; 3-digit carrier route or carrier routes containers are not allowed. All flat-size pieces must be prepared in carrier route or 5-digit carrier route sacks. All pieces for the same carrier route must be tied in bundles of 50, so far as practicable, and each bundle must bear a facing slip showing desired distribution (e.g., 5-digit ZIP Code and route number). If the pieces are tied in quantities other than 50 each, the actual number must be shown on the facing slip. Delivery statistics for routes may be obtained as described in [509.1.0](#). Pieces in such mailings also must meet the following standards:

- a. All pieces must be in the same processing category.
- b. Pieces must be marked according to [102](#), [202](#), [302](#), or [402](#).
- c. Letter-size pieces must be prepared in trays, and flat-size pieces must be prepared in sacks under [707.23.0](#), *Preparation of Carrier Route Periodicals*, or, for Carrier Route Standard Mail, see [245.6.0](#) for letters, [345.6.0](#) for flats, or [445.6.0](#) for parcels.
- d. If selective distribution is desired, enough pieces must be presented to cover the route or routes selected.

3.2.4 Postage

Postage must be paid with permit imprint, meter indicia, precanceled stamps, or other authorized methods not requiring cancellation, according to the standards for the class of mail.

3.2.5 Address Designation

Only the address designations in [3.2.1](#) or [3.2.2](#) may be used. Other designations (e.g., "Food Buyer," "Voter") are not permitted.

3.3 Occupant Address

3.3.1 Use of Occupant Address

The occupant address format (“Postal Customer” or “Occupant,” “Householder,” or “Resident”) may be used to address mail selectively to a rural route and box number, a specific street number, or a specific post office box number without using the addressee’s name:

Example

POSTAL CUSTOMER
2711 ORDWAY ST NW APT 204
WASHINGTON DC 20008-5036

3.4 Exceptional Address

3.4.1 Use of Exceptional Address

The exceptional address format (“Jane Doe or Current Resident” or “Jane Doe or Current Occupant”) may be used on any mail except mail types listed in [3.1.2](#). The word “Current” is optional. The order of the words may be reversed (e.g., “Current Resident or Jane Doe” rather than “Jane Doe or Current Resident”).

3.4.2 Placement

The exceptional address format must be placed in the address block, with the following exceptions:

- a. If all the current resident/occupant information cannot be placed on the first or second line of the address, the exceptional address format may be placed no more than 3/4 inch above the address block.
- b. If an optional endorsement line (OEL) is used, the mailer may elect to place the exceptional address format above the OEL. In these cases, the exceptional address format must be at least 1/2 inch, but not more than 3/4 inch, above the optional endorsement line. If a window envelope is used with an OEL, the exceptional address information may be printed either in the area on the insert showing through the window or on the envelope above the window.

4.0 Detached Address Labels (DAL)

4.1 DAL Use

4.1.1 Definition

For these standards, *item(s)* refers inclusively to the types of mail described in [4.1.2](#) through [4.1.4](#).

4.1.2 Periodicals or Standard Mail Flats

Saturation mailings of unaddressed Periodicals or Standard Mail flats may be mailed with detached address labels (DALs). For this standard, saturation mailing means a mailing sent to at least 75% of the total addresses on a carrier route or 90% of the residential addresses on a route, whichever is less. Deliveries are not required to every carrier route of a delivery unit.

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4.1.3 Standard Mail Merchandise Samples

Merchandise samples more than 5 inches wide (high) or 1/4 inch thick, or nonuniform in thickness, mailed at Standard Mail rates, must be mailed with DALs when prepared for general distribution on city delivery routes. Merchandise samples may be mailed with DALs for general distribution on other (e.g., rural) routes and for the residual portion of a general distribution mailing. For this standard, *general distribution* means distribution in a single mailing to at least 25% of the addresses in any 5-digit ZIP Code delivery area regardless of the number of samples addressed to a single route or the number of 5-digit areas to which samples are addressed. If the same mailing includes a general distribution to one or more 5-digit areas and a secondary distribution of lesser quantities to one or more other 5-digit areas, pieces in the secondary distribution are considered residual.

4.1.4 Bound Printed Matter

Unaddressed pieces of Bound Printed Matter may be mailed with DALs when:

- a. The mail is prepared on 5-digit pallets meeting the standards in [705.8.0](#), except that for flat-size mail, separate 5-digit pallets of carrier route and Presorted rate mail are not required. The destination delivery unit (DDU) is determined using the Drop Shipment Product under the provisions for the DDU rate in [366.2.0](#) through [366.5.0](#) or [466.2.0](#) through [466.5.0](#). The mail may not be prepared on pallets when the Drop Shipment Product indicates that the delivery unit that serves the 5-digit pallet destination cannot handle pallets. For such delivery units, mail with DALs must be prepared in sacks. The trays or cartons of DALs must be prepared under [4.3](#), placed on the same pallet as the pieces, and must be stretch-wrapped together as one unit.
- b. The mail is prepared in 5-digit sacks and entered at the destination delivery unit. The destination delivery unit is determined by using the Drop Shipment Product under the provisions for the DDU rate in [366.2.0](#) through [366.5.0](#) or [466.2.0](#) through [466.5.0](#). DALs must be bundled under [4.3](#) and presented to the destination delivery unit with the accompanying items to be distributed with the DALs.

4.1.5 Alternative Addressing Formats

The addresses on DALs may be prepared using an alternative addressing format under [3.0](#), subject to the applicable eligibility, volume, density, and preparation standards.

4.1.6 Documentation

When requested by the USPS, DAL mailers must provide documentation to establish that the applicable distribution standards in [4.1.2](#) through [4.1.4](#) are met.

4.1.7 Extra Services

Items mailed with DALs may not be combined with any extra services.

4.2 Label Preparation**4.2.1 Label Construction**

Each DAL must be made of paper or cardboard stock that is not folded, perforated, or creased, and that meets these measurements:

- a. Between 3-1/2 and 5 inches high (perpendicular to the address label).

- b. Between 5 and 9 inches long (parallel to the address label).
- c. At least 0.007 inch thick.

4.2.2 Addressing

The address for each item must be placed on a DAL, parallel to the longest dimension of the DAL, and may not appear on the item it accompanies. The DAL must contain the recipient's delivery address and the mailer's return address. A ZIP+4 code or 5-digit ZIP Code is required unless a simplified address format is used. The delivery address may include the correct delivery point barcode.

4.2.3 Ratio

Only one DAL may be prepared for each accompanying item, and only one item may be identified for delivery per DAL (a single DAL may not be prepared to deliver one each of different accompanying items or multiples of the same item).

4.2.4 Required Information

The following words must appear in bold type at least 1/8 inch high on the front of each DAL: "USPS regulations require that this address label be delivered with its accompanying postage-paid mail. If you should receive this label without its accompanying mail, please notify your local postmaster." The title or brand name of the item (which may include an illustration of the item) must also appear on the front or back of the DAL to associate it with the accompanying item.

4.2.5 Other Information

Nothing may appear on the front of a DAL except the information described in [4.2.2](#) and [4.2.4](#), an indicium of postage payment, and official pictures and data circulated by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Ancillary service endorsements are not permitted. Undeliverable material is treated under [4.4](#).

4.3 Mail Preparation

4.3.1 Notice to Delivery Office

Each delivery office to receive a DAL mailing must be notified in writing at least 10 days before the requested delivery period. To ensure that the delivery office can readily relate the notice to the cartons containing the corresponding items, a copy of that letter must be enclosed with the DALs unless the initial notice and the cartons used for the DALs and items each conspicuously bears a mailing identification number. The letter must contain the following information:

- a. Name and telephone number of mailer or representative.
- b. Origin post office of mailing.
- c. Expected mailing date.
- d. Description of mailing.
- e. Number of addressees for each 5-digit ZIP Code.
- f. Number of DALs per carton or bundle.
- g. Number of items per carton or bundle.
- h. Expected delivery period (range of dates).
- i. Requested action for excess or undeliverable DALs or items (see [4.4](#)).

4.3.2 DALs

The DALs must be presorted, counted, and packed by 5-digit ZIP Code delivery area. Only DALs for the same 5-digit area may be placed in the same carton. DAL mailings claimed at carrier route or walk-sequence rates must be further prepared under the corresponding standards. Different size cartons may be used in the same mailing, but each must be filled with dunnage as necessary to ensure that the DALs retain their integrity while in transit. Each carton of DALs must bear a label showing the information in 4.3.5 unless a mailing identification number is used (see 4.3.1). Multiple containers of DALs must be numbered sequentially (“1 of __,” “2 of __,” etc.).

4.3.3 Items

The items to be distributed with the DALs must be placed in cartons or prepared in bundles placed in sacks, as appropriate for the type of item and subject to the standards for the rate claimed. A label bearing the content description information in 4.3.5 must be affixed to each carton, sacked bundle, or pallet unless a mailing identification number is used (see 4.3.1). Cartons of items (including those on pallets) may be of different sizes but must be filled with dunnage as necessary to ensure the integrity of the items while in transit. The gross weight of each carton or sack must not be more than 40 pounds.

4.3.4 Combined Cartons

Both the DALs and the accompanying items may be enclosed in the same carton when sent to a small volume 5-digit ZIP Code area. If packed together, these standards apply:

- a. The DALs must be bundled and labeled under 4.3.2 and placed on top of the items.
- b. The carton must be packed with dunnage to ensure the integrity of the contents while in transit.
- c. The gross weight of the carton must not exceed 40 pounds.
- d. The exterior of the carton must be labeled under 4.3.5 and marked “DALs ENCLOSED” in letters not less than 1/2 inch high.

4.3.5 Label Information

Sacks, cartons, and pallets of DAL mail must be labeled under the preparation standards for the rate claimed. A second label must be affixed to each carton or sacked bundle to provide the following information (unless a mailing identification number is used under 4.3.1):

- a. Delivery post office name and 5-digit ZIP Code delivery area.
- b. Title, brand name, or other description of the items.
- c. Name and telephone number of the mailer or representative.
- d. Number of labels or items in the carton, as applicable.
- e. Instructions to open and distribute either the DALs with matching items or the items with matching DALs, as appropriate.

4.3.6 Use of Equipment

Cartons, bundles of flats, and sacks of items may be palletized under the applicable standards; cartons of DALs must be palletized with the corresponding items under the same standards. The USPS plant manager at whose facility a DAL mailing is deposited may authorize other types of equipment for the portion of the mailing to be delivered in that plant's service area.

4.4 Disposition of Excess or Undeliverable Material**4.4.1 Excess Material**

The letter required under [4.3.1](#) must either request that the delivery office contact the mailer (or representative) about excess DALs or items, or provide instructions for their treatment. (If the mailer does not provide information about excess DALs or items, such material is disposed of as waste by the USPS.) The mailer must choose one of the following options for each DAL mailing and the items:

- a. Disposal of any excess material as waste.
- b. Return of the excess material to the mailer, postage due at the applicable single-piece rate under [4.5](#).
- c. Holding of the excess material for pickup by the mailer (or representative). If pickup is not made within 15 calendar days of the notice to the mailer, the material is returned to the mailer postage due.
- d. Holding of the excess material while additional DALs or items are supplied (as applicable). If additional material is not supplied within 15 days of the notice to the mailer, the excess material is returned to the mailer postage due. Additional material must be sent prepaid to the delivery post office as First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, or Express Mail.

4.4.2 Undeliverable DAL

A DAL that is undeliverable as addressed (UAA) is handled under [507.1.1](#) through [507.1.9](#) for the applicable class of mail. The accompanying item is treated as specified by the mailer under [4.4.1](#).

4.5 Postage**4.5.1 Available Rates**

DAL mailings are not eligible for any automation rate, but they may qualify for a carrier route rate, subject to the applicable standards.

4.5.2 Initial Distribution

Postage is computed based on the weight of the entire mailpiece (the combined weight of the item and the accompanying DAL). If the number of DALs and items mailed is not identical, the number of pieces used to determine postage is the greater of the two. No postage refund is allowed in these situations. The total weight of the mailing excludes the weight of the cartons used to carry the DALs or items, dunnage, and carton labels. In addition, these methods of postage payment apply:

- a. Periodicals flats must be prepaid. A notice of entry must appear in the upper right corner of the DAL.

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- b. Standard Mail flats and samples and Bound Printed Matter must be paid by permit imprint, which must appear on each DAL. Standard Mail postage is computed at the applicable nonletter rates.

4.5.3 Returns

Postage for excess or undeliverable DALs that are properly endorsed or for items being returned is computed at the single-piece rate (First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, or Package Services) applicable to the combined weight of the DAL and the accompanying item, regardless of whether both are returned. The total amount due for returned material, which includes the return postage and the applicable address correction fee for each DAL or item returned, is collected when the material is returned to the mailer.

4.5.4 Additional Items

Postage for additional material (DALs or items) mailed to the USPS under [4.4.1d](#) must be prepaid as First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, or Express Mail, subject to the eligibility standards for the rate claimed and the conditions in [4.5.2](#).